

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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EA/IMS - MR. HEAVNER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SN

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE TERRORIST EPISODE

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

1. FOLLOWING BRIEFLY SUMMARIZES TERRORIST EPISODE IN SINGAPORE. ON JANUARY 31 FOUR TERRORISTS, TWO JAPANESE RED ARMY MEMBERS AND TWO ARABS ASSOCIATED WITH MARXIST-ORIENTED PEOPLE'S FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF PALESTINE, ATTEMPTED BLOW UP LARGE SHELL REFINERY IN SINGAPORE. EXPLOSION CAUSED ONLY SLIGHT DAMAGE. TERRORISTS THEN SEIZED FERRY-BOAT AND FIVE HOSTAGES BUT SINGAPORE POLICE PREVENTED THEIR ESCAPE BY SURROUNDING FERRYBOAT.

2. ON FEBRUARY 2, PRIME MINISTER LEE CALLED IN AMBASSADOR CRONK AND REQUESTED THAT USG PROVIDE SKY MARSHALLS AND OTHER FORMS OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE AGAINST POTENTIAL
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THREATS TO SIA AIRCRAFT AND INSTILLATIONS. IN RESPONSE,

TWO FAA EXPERTS FLEW TO SINGAPORE TO SURVEY THE SITUATION AND THREE OTHERS ARE SLATED TO ARRIVE SHORTLY. GOS OFFICIALS SEEM DELIGHTED WITH OUR PROMPT ASSISTANCE AND NOW APPEAR MORE INTERESTED IN AIRPORT SECURITY THAN IN IN-FLIGHT PROTECTION. IN MEANTIME, FORMER US SKY MARSHALLS (US PROGRAM WAS CONSIDERED FAILURE AND DISBANDED) HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND POSSIBLE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS OPTION

ARE UNDER STUDY.

3. TERRORISTS REMAINED ON FERRYBOAT IN SINGAPORE HARBOR FOR EIGHT DAYS WHILE GOS MADE STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO ARRANGE FOR THEIR EXIT FROM COUNTRY. BOTH JAPAN AND SINGAPORE OFFERED FLY TERRORISTS TO UNSPECIFIED ARAB COUNTRY IN KEEPING WITH THEIR DEMANDS AFTER GOS HAD GRANTED THEM SAFECONDUCT OUT OF SINGAPORE, BUT TERRORISTS REFUSED TO GO UNLESS THEY COULD KEEP WEAPONS. GOS OFFER TO LET TERRORISTS SAIL AWAY IN FERRYBOAT WAS ALSO DECLINED. FOR TIME TERRORISTS DID APPEAR WILLING TO SEEK REFUGE IN NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE BUT NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT RESPOND TO THEIR REQUEST.

4. THESE EFFORTS WERE OVERTAKEN ON FEBRUARY 6 WHEN ANOTHER GROUP OF ARAB AND JAPANESE TERRORISTS OCCUPIED JAPANESE EMBASSY IN KUWAIT, HOLDING STAFF AS HOSTAGE AND DEMANDING THAT JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE AIRCRAFT TO FLY SINGAPORE TERRORIST GROUP WITH THEIR WEAPONS AND HOSTAGES FROM SINGAPORE TO KUWAIT. JAPANESE AGREED AND JAL DC-8 WAS FLOWN TO SINGAPORE FOR THIS PURPOSE, BUT REMAINED THERE FOR A WHILE BECAUSE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT AT FIRST REFUSED TO ALLOW THEM ENTRY. SUBSEQUENTLY, KUWAIT GRANTED PERMISSION FOR AIRCRAFT TO LAND, BUT ONLY FOR PURPOSE OF PICKING UP TERRORISTS IN KUWAIT AND TAKING THEM OUT OF COUNTRY. PLANE TOOK OFF FROM SINGAPORE FOR KUWAIT IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF FEBRUARY 8 WITH FOUR TERRORISTS ABOARD. ORIGINAL SINGAPORE HOSTAGES WERE LEFT BEHIND, BUT 12 GOS OFFICIALS ACCOMPANIED TERRORISTS ON FLIGHT AS SUBSTITUTES. THESE WERE RELEASED SAFELY AFTER PLANE LANDED IN KUWAIT. KISSINGER

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